No. 13

THE HEROINES SHOWCASE

$1.00

Red Sonja

KRENKEL
(1933)
SMITH
(1972)
FRANK
THORNE
THORNE
(1978)

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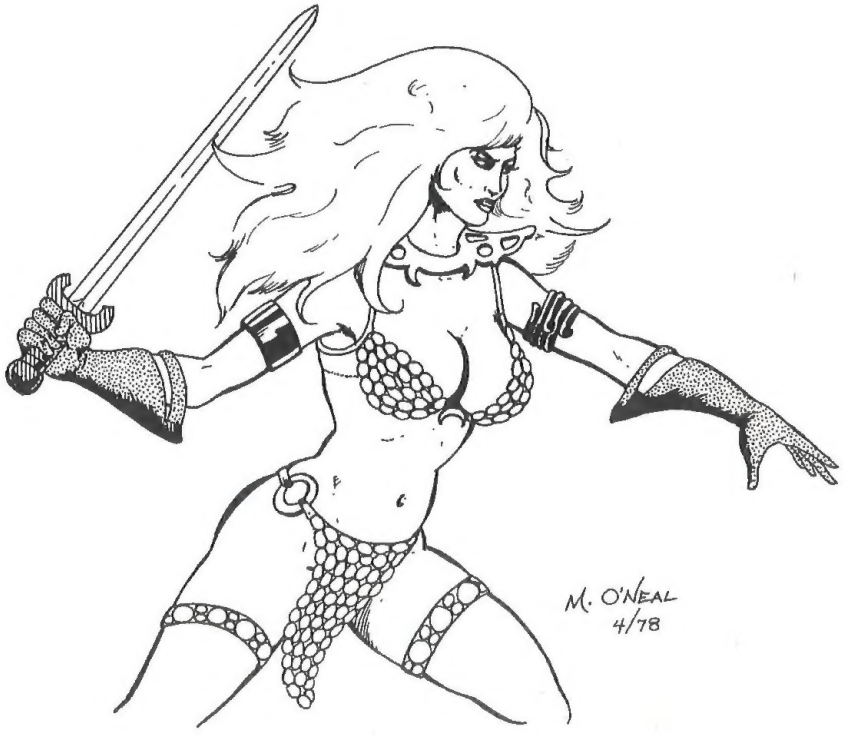

RED-HOT SONJA

part one

BY JEFF THOMPSON

One question: What dynamic new comic book heroine already has been the subject of her own specialized comic conventions and fan clubs, has had lookalike contests and beauty pageants held in her honor, and has been written up in the March 20, 1978, *Newsweek*? She is none other than the voluptuous and vicious Red Sonja, who first appeared in the pages of a Marvel Comics Group publication in late 1972 – but who actually has been "in existence" for no less than 44 years!

Toward the beginning of this century, a prodigious author named Robert E. Howard lived for a mere 30 years – yet, in that time, Howard graced the pages of many pulp magazines with such swashbuckling, barbaric heroes of his own creation as King Kull the Conqueror of the year 18,000 BC, Conan the Barbarian of the year 10,000 BC, Solomon Kane and von Kalmbach of the late AD 1500's – and an obscure Russian character named Red Sonya of Rogantine. In "The Shadow of the Vulture" – a story by Robert E. Howard published in the January 1934 edition of a pulp magazine entitled *The Magic Carpet* – the German knight, von Kalmbach, encounters the beautiful Sonya of Rogantine. The year is AD 1963, during the siege of Vienna, Austria, by the Turks, and Red Sonya comes to the aid of the grateful Teutonic soldier.

Marvel Comics published *Conan the Barbarian* #1 (October, 1970) at the beginning of this decade and proceeded to adapt other Robert E. Howard fantasy characters to comic book form. Marvel's Roy Thomas, Conan's scripter, decided to modify the character of Red Sonya of Rogantine and place her in Conan's prehistoric world. Thus, Thomas and artist Barry Smith collaborated on a story entitled "The Shadow of the Vulture!" for *Conan the Barbarian* #23 (February, 1973), in which the Cimmerian warrior, Conan, replaced the original von Kalmbach – and Red Sonja of Hyrkania was born! In her initial comics appearance, Red Sonja was described as a twentyish adventuress born in the month of the Tiger in Hyrkania (a country which lies hundreds of miles from Conan's native Cimmeria beyond a vast desert and the Vilayet Sea), who now is a mercenary soldier employed by King Ghannif of Pah-Dishah.

In the story, Conan is being ambushed by a band of Turanians at the gates of the city of Makkalet when Red Sonja, clad in a chain-mail shirt and leather shorts, thunders onto the scene with her small army to aid the Cimmerian. "Ho, dog-brothers!" the seemingly fearless She-Devil With a Sword cries. "Let's show the gutless pigs how the warriors of Pah-Dishah can fight! By Tarim, we'll give the devils scarlet wine to drink this dawn – or my name's not Red Sonja!"

At first, Conan takes a chauvinistic view of this beautiful-yet-mannish woman: "No one fights all my battles for me – least of all a wench who should be tending a hearth somewhere!" However, after the Turanians are defeated, Conan effects a dubious friendship with Red Sonja, who reappears toward the end of the 21 page story to help Conan out of another bind.

Since its inception in 1970, *Conan the Barbarian* has been very instrumental in introducing much more violence, blood, cruelty, cursing, semi-nudity, sexual innuendoes, and suggestive subplots to American, Comics Code approved comic magazines. Conan's fantastic setting of a world of completely unfettered and guiltless sexuality and violence probably is the reason for the magazine's success among wishfully-thinking Americans of all ages! Red Sonja's appearances and series from 1972 to date have followed Conan's lead – and perhaps even passed it in some respects! While Red Sonja of Hyrkania has struck effective blows for women's liberation and female independence, she at the same time has become a comic book sex object rivalling the alluring Sheena, Phantom Lady, Black Cat, and other "good girls" of decades gone by! In many of Red Sonja's total appearances to date, the She-Devil has disrobed for sleeping or

bathing purposes – or to get a massage by a male servant in one issue! – and/or has been subjected by men to bondage (and discipline?) in provacative poses. Virtually every other issue, Sonja either climbs up and enters, or runs around outside of, a very phallic-looking tower or spire (two obvious examples being in *Conan* #24 and *Red Sonja* #6!); Sigmund Freud would have had a field day! Perphaps the reson for Red Sonja's success is the fact that the Hyrkanian warrior-woman speaks to her readers on several different levels. She provides exciting adventures for her juvenile readers; Sonja personifies the ultimate in women's liberation to most feminists; and she titillates many of her older male readers through her sexually-implicit exploits – either suggested or half-depicted.

Red Sonja's second appearance is a landmark, for it won the 1973 Shazam! Award for best comic book story of the year. The magazine was *Conan the Barbarian* #24 (March, 1973) and the story was "The Song of Red Sonja," by Thomas and Smith. Red Sonja and Conan swim together briefly in a provocative scene near the beginning of the 20 page story; Conan then hopes for more than just swimming from the coquettish Hyrkanian beauty, but Sonja fends him off and dupes him into helping her steal an enchanted serpent tiara atop one of those tall, "mushroom?" – like towers on the grounds of Makkalet's palace royal. After their caper, Conan again wishes to pursue other activities, but the elusive Sonja rides off on their one and only horse, declaring, "NO man's lips shall ever touch mine, Cimmerian, save those of him who has defeated me on the field of battle – and that even YOU shall never do!" ("The Song of Red Sonja" was reprinted several months ago in *Marvel Treasury Edition* #15.)

It was almost a year-and-a-half before the crimson-tressed She-Devil With a Sword appeared again. When she did (in *The Savage Sword of Conan* #1, August, 1974), she was sporting a new and much abbreviated costume. Sonja still wears what has been called her "chain-mail bikini" or her "portable coin collection," muct to the delight of most of her fans. In *Savage Sword* #1, Sonja crosses paths with Conan again, this time in the City of Thieves, where the barbaric duo proceeds to battle Costranno, a sorcerer. At one point in the story, Conan tells Sonja, "By the way, did I tell you I like your armor – what little there is of it?" The Hyrkanian beauty replies, "An Ophirean pikeman said the same thing to me the other day, just before he made a grab for me. I hope he can learn to wield a pike left-handed. Now tell me what you've been up to."

This casual attitude of Sonja's toward killing or maiming people is characteristic of almost all of the barbarians of the comic books. In Red Sonja's 30 comic book appearances to date, she has killed approximately 25 men, slain many inhuman creatures, wounded or assaulted countless other people, and even murdered four women (in *Conan* #44, *Marvel Feature* #4, and *Red Sonja* #3 & 6)! If Sonja lived in 1978, she would be on the Ten Most Wanted List! As well as describing her hair, the "Red" before Sonja's name could be referring to her penchant for bloodbaths!

The Savage Sword of Conan #1 is also noteworthy because it contains Red Sonja's first solo appearance, a 10 pager written by Roy Thomas and illustrated by Esteban Maroto & Neal Adams. In it, Sonja slays King Ghannif of Pah-Dishah when he molests her, thus becoming a fugitive from justice! (The City of Thieves adventure with Conan was reprinted in *Conan the*

Barbarian #78 and Sonja's 10 page solo story was reprinted in *Marvel Feature* #1.)

Red Sonja again joined Conan for the two-part "Tower of Blood" saga in *Conan the Barbarian* #43 & 44 (October & November, 1974). In this adventure, she and Conan encounter the immortal siblings, Morophla (a gnomish old man) and Uathact (a tall, sleek beauty). The two sorcerers are accustomed to taking sexual favors from their visitors and then draining their blood to refresh their own immortality! Uathact hurls Red Sonja into a pit where Dromek – a green and lascivious man-monster – waits to mate with her – much to Morophla's anger! Conan rescues Sonja, however, and both barbarians are confined to a dungeon.

When Conan offers to give himself to Uathact if she will betray her brother and help him and Sonja to escape, the Cimmerian asks Sonja if she is jealous. "No! There is no place for such things in my life!" she insists. "Sometimes, I almost want there to be, but there is not – and there never will be!" (Red Sonja and Conan finally escape by setting fire to Morophla and Uathacht's castle – then Sonja knocks out Conan from behind with a stone and flees on their only horse again!)

Many Red Sonja fans refer to her next four appearances – all solo stories! – as the Darkwood Forest Tales. In *Conan the Barbarian* #48 (March, 1975), the first story, an old man named Vincentius captures Sonja and binds her to an altar with a man named Nunwolf and prepares to sacrifice them both to the gods. Need I add that Vincentius was unsuccessful? In *Kull and the Barbarians* #2 (July, 1975), Red Sonja encounters Ghuntar, the werewolf of Darkwood Forest, who regretfully has slain his mother while he was a wolf. Also in this issue are two photographs of Ms. Dawn Greil of San Diego, California, modeling a replica of Sonja's first costume.

Red Sonja's Darkwood Forest odyssey continued in *Kull and the Barbarians* #3 (September, 1975) in a remarkable 14 page origin story called "The Day of the Sword" by Roy Thomas, Doug Moench, and Howie Chaykin. Finally we heroine addicts learned how Sonja came to be a warrior and why she rarely if ever allows herself to be touched in any way by men! Sonja's origin story resembles the origin of Batman in some ways, yet its originality and poignance is always in evidence.

According to "The Day of the Sword," Sonja lived in Hyrkania with her mother, her father Ivor (a retired mercenary in the Hyrkanian Army whose left leg had been replaced by a wooden peg), and her two younger brothers – until one day five years ago, when Sonja was 18 or 19 years old. On that day, one of Ivor's former foes rode up to their house with several other men. The nameless soldier who hated Ivor proceeded to slay him before his family's very eyes! He then murdered Sonja's first brother, her mother, her other brother – and then the sadistic soldier dragged Sonja into her house and brutally raped her in her own bed! The soldiers set fire to the cottage and departed, but Sonja managed to escape. Nauseous and sobbing, she stumbled along the countryside clutching her dead father's sword until she saw an unearthly vision of what must have been a god! The shimmering deity hovering in the air above Sonja pointed out the sword and declared, "You have suffered deeply, Sonja, but know that there is strength born in suffering. This strength is your own, Sonja, and has ever dwelled within you, but has only now been awakened. If you but have the will, Sonja, you may use your strength to make the world your home. You may become a wanderer, the equal of any man or woman

you meet. But first you must make a vow to me, Sonja. You must never allow yourself to be loved by another man unless he has defeated you in fair battle – something NO man is like to do after this day!" The divine being touched its own ethereal sword to Sonja's right shoulder – then vanished.

Sonja, who had been a mediocre swordswoman before now, somehow knew that she would be a mistress of the blade after that. She was proven right when one of the straggling ruffians returned to take his turn with her! Sonja engaged in a brilliant swordfight with the man and slew him! "But the sight of blood no longer sickened Sonja, nor did the feel of her first kill. Instead, she had felt exhilaration and fierce rage which she shouted to the world in a loud voice of defiance. It was a voice which well suited her second vow of that dark day. And though she has ridden far and lived much since that day, she has never forgotten that vow: 'I will find you, Nameless One, and I will repay you for what you have done – to my family and to ME!'"

On this day, in Darkwood Forest (*Kull and the Barbarians* #3), Red Sonja comes face-to-face with the Nameless One who killed her family and raped her five years ago – but now the once malevolent man is no more than a raving lunatic! Sonja is angry that the Nameless One is too demented to realize why she would slay him, so she leaves him in the forest, satisfied that he has been punished, even if it was not by her own sword. Red Sonja now can put her dreadful memories in their proper perspectives and go on with her life.

Red Sonja deservedly acquired her own successful, bi-monthly series in late summer, 1975, in the pages of the new *Marvel Feature*. The first issue (November, 1975) reprinted her solo story from *The Savage Sword of Conan* #1 and featured a new 8 pager by Thomas and Giordano, "The Temple of Abomination," in which Sonja, still wandering through Darkwood Forest, battles an army of satyrs.

Frank Thorne, the distinctive artist who now has become almost synoymous with Red Sonja of Hyrkania, began illustrating her adventures with *Marvel Feature* #2 (January, 1976) – and he has not yet missed an issue since then! Thorne's rendition of Sonja depicts her as not so quite as typically beautiful, which is good; but *savagely alluring.* Thorne's practice of drawing Sonja's eyes with thick black lines captues the savagely sexy essence of the heroine! In the story in *Marvel Feature* #2, Sonja befriends a temperamental teenage boy named Dunkin who has a left peg leg – just like her father had!

Marvel Feature #3 (March, 1976) sported a bondage cover by Frank Thorne; the story in *Marvel Feature* #4 (May, 1976), in which rats crawl on Sonja's body, was reprinted in *The Superhero Woman* by Stan Lee; *Marvel Feature* #5 (July, 1976) featured a Thorne pin-up of Sonja instead of the letters page and an adventure in which Sonja allows herself to be romanced briefly by a man named Tusan before they confront a Bear-God together.

After almost two years, Sonja was reunited with Conan in a spectacular, five-part cross-over story in the pages of *Conan the Barbarian* #66 and *Marvel Feature* #6, *Conan* #67, *Marvel Feature* #7 and *Conan* #68! This along with *Red Sonja* #1-12 and the 1976 SonjaCon, will be the subjects of "Red-Hot Sonja, Part Two," next issue!

Jeff Thompson * 6807 Pennywell Dr. * Nashville, TN 37205

CLUB NEWS by Nick Chinn

Ugh! What a pain in the moon! Club news is supposed to be a feature of this fanzine, but sometimes I wonder whether some of the stuff that has been written in this column is really interesting enough to read. I've read some of the past editions of this column, and no offense guys, but I want to get right to the fine articles and art! This is my first stab at doing this and I want to keep it very short. But there are some things that have to be covered.

We need help in locating subscribers who have money in their accounts but have had their 'zines returned to us because of the lack of a forwarding address. The persons and their last known whereabouts: Jerald Magia (Los Angeles, CA); Joanna P. Moore (Richmond, IN); Wes Smith (Paw-Paw, MI); and John P. Wentworth (Alhambra, CA).

Thanks to John Butler for spending the morning of April 15 from 2:30 to 5 a.m., helping publisher Steve Johnson in collating TA #6, and to Adrienne Foster for stapling and trimming said issue that evening.

Bringing down the printing bill by collating, stapling and trimming the book by ourselves is not easy or exciting, but it does help cut costs, pay for our color cover stock (which aids in selling the books), and may even help get Club finances out of the hole. As you know, the fanzine business has never been a money-making operation.

The "Charlie's Angels" poster that was mailed along with TA #6 to most of our subscribers was provided and paid for by our former editor, Ted Delorme. The poster was light enough to include without extra postage cost. Ted would probably appreciate your comments. He's at 977 Mt. Vernon Dr., Charleston, SC 29412.

Some back issues of *The Heroine Addict* #3 may be missing a flat, consisting of pages 3, 4, 33 and 34. You can get a copy of the missing leaf for 25¢ from Steve. Also, THA #3 & 4 are now completely sold out and out of print. If you need copies of our other back issues, get them now before we run out.

Mailings of CHFC publications go out via 3rd Class mail, which usually takes anywhere from five days to two weeks for delivery (the Southeastern areas of the U.S. seem to get their copies the latest). But this is the most economical way to send the issues at this time.

We have some dynamite artwork in the art auction this time around. Your generous bids are appreciated, and besides helping to keep the Club financially afloat, the bids provide encouragement and incentive to our fine artists.

Well, that's the business on hand. This issue will provide for a lot of good reading, with two interviews making up most of the book. We received some comments that last issue didn't contain enough reading material, but speaking for myself and Steve, we enjoy a good amount of excellent artwork, too. As for this issue's Frank Throne illo, it's probably the first time you have ever seen Krenkel's, Smith's and Thorne's versions of Red Sonja all on the same page. Frank said that he's never gotten a request to do anything like it. Now, is that good or bad?

As for the new editor of the CHFC publications, namely me, he's working closely with Steve to get these books out on schedule, and we are succeeding rather well, thanks to the cooperation of our staff. I, for one, am impressed. There are few fanzines being published with quality and regularity. Ours is one of them, modesty aside. Ahem.

FIREHAIR

"The War-Paint Renegades"* (origin) - *11 pgs.*

Firehair Comics #1 - *Winter 1948/49*

Golden Age Girls

by Steve Johnson

"It happened yesterday – yesterday when America was wild and raw and young . . . Beginning an epic story of the West that will never die, and of a girl that fate named 'Firehair'!"

"Through the solitary sun-parched street of Plainsville, an ever shifting tide of adventurers constantly flowed on toward the distant rolling prairies and snow topped mountains of the unsettled West. A determined race of men, seeking to make some long cherished dream come true . . . "

The morning stage pulled into Plainsville, and disembarking passengers J.B. Smith and his flame-haired daughter are met by trail boss Catamount Kelly. He informs them that the wagon train that they have booked with will be pulling out at noon.

Purchasing western clothing to replace their eastern garb, J.B. Smith and daughter Lynn are soon aboard their covered wagon as the wagon train heads west. But they are unaware that evil eyes will be keeping a buzzard's vigil on the wagon train's progress.

Near sunset the third day out, the wagon train completes the crossing of Sawtooth ford when they are ambushed by renegades disguished as Indians. J.B. Smith is the first victim as he is struck down by an arrow intended for Cat Kelly. Lynn is left to handle the bolting team of mules as all but a few of the outnumbered settlers are massacred by the raiders.

Gathering up their loot, including a black strong box belonging to Lynn's father, the raiders torch the wagons and depart. But there is a hidden watcher in the hills, Little Ax, son of Chief Tehama. Surveying the tragedy he finds the still but alive form of Lynn and takes her to his village.

The medicine man treats her, but when she revives the next morning, the shock of the massacre has stolen her memory. The elders of the tribe meet and urge that the white maiden be gotten rid of as she represents evidence of the massacre that will be directed against the tribe. Little Ax argues that she is the only proof against the white man's murder lies, and claims her as his captive by the Law of the Knife until she regains her memory. His challenge goes unanswered and he proclaims, "She is mine, Great Spirit – my sister . . . and I will make her well and care for her!"

". . . And so it was that she came to the tepees of Tehama's tribe . . . the girl who could remember only that a voice she loved had called her 'Princess' . . . and the days passed and the seasons changed, and tomorrow

Costume: Green buckskin with red fringe
Hair: Red

she would win the name that the wetern winds have carried far – Firehair!"

"The Girl of the Golden West" did go on to win the name of Firehair. Her courage and skill proved to be the equal of any of the warriors of the Dakota tribe that adopted her.

As further chronicled in this issue, Firehair captures and tames a king of stallions that she names Devil-Eye, battles a brown bear and catamount, regains her memory and brings justice against the gang that ambushed the wagon train and killed her father, recovers her father's strong box, travels east to claim the fortune that her merchant father, *John Cabot*, had outlined in the box, and thrwarts an attempt to steal her inheritance.

But her ties to her red brothers and sisters proved too strong. And apparently without other family ties, or perhaps for the same unknown reason that her father abandoned his fortune and headed west, Firehair returned to the tribe of Chief Tehama where her exciting adventures continued.

The artist on this book, as well as a major part of the series, was Lee Elias. Perhaps best known during the Golden Age for his work on Black Cat, his work here is unsurpassed. His style and composition blend superbly with the western setting.

The writer credits on the series are listed as "John Starr," but as is so often the case with Fiction House, it is just another house name that was used by all the writers working on the series.

Firehair earned her own comic after nearly four years of her seven year run as a feature in *Rangers Comics*. The title of her book was temporarily changed to *Pioneer West Romances* for issues #3-5, but she quickly regained the title for the duration of the book.

All in all, this is a fantastic book and series, and still a bargain despite the push on prices by the Good Girl Art trend.

****

"The Queen of the Sagebrush Frontier" appeared in:

Firehair Comics #1,2;6-11 (Win. 1948/49 - Spr. 1949; Win. 1949/50 - Spr. 1952)
cover app. #1,2,6-11; origin #1
4 stories #1,2; 3 stories #6,8; 2 stories #7,9-11

I.W. Reprint #8
cover app.; rpt. Rangers Comics #57

Pioneer West Romances #3-5 (Sum. 1949 - Feb. 1949)
cover app. #3-5
4 stories #3; 3 stories #4,5

Rangers Comics #21-65 (Feb. 1945 - June 1952)
cover app. #38-65

****

FRANK THORNE, WENDY PINI, WENDY SNOW and DIANNE DeKELB

THE GREAT RED SONJA INTERVIEW – PART II

starring

Frank Thorne and Angelique (Red Sonja) Trouvere

plus

Marilyn Thorne and a lot of other people in the background

by Margaret O'Connell

(Continued from The Heroines Showcase #12)

FRANK: Barry Smith's Sonja is a modest Sonja. And I won't take full credit for the costume. I revised Esteban Maroto's costume to what it is here, so the stigma cannot be fully cast upon me for her minimal attire.

Now maybe I'm hiding behind that. But I will say right out that I'm proud of it, and I will defend her from church steeples, from plateaus, in any landscapes, because I love her. And I declare that to the world, and this is what I'm offering to the world. Even though I inherited her I will go to my grave saying that I bore her standard with honor, and though they call her nightmare, with melon-sized breats, who castrates men, I say, "Fie upon you, she's a great character, and I love her, and she talks the land, and she will after I'm gone."

I imagine someday there's going to be a thunderous rap at the door, and Mephistopheles is going to come and say, "It's time now, Sonja awaits you."

You've gotta realize, Margaret, that here I am, a poor slob who's drawn all these characters, Flash Gordon, you name it, down the line, in all the strips and all of that, and received maybe five letters a year. A fanzine never looked at me, I never was interviewed, and within a period of a year and a few months, I am being interviewed by fanzines, we've been on three network television shows –

THS: Oh my God, why didn't I see them?

FRANK: We were on Group W Network's *Evening Magazine* show. It was called "Red Sonja's Wild World." They came to the house and shot half of it in the studio and the "Sonja Room." We have a room in our home that is crammed with Sonja stuff. Mostly from fans. Letters, drawings, paintings, photos adorn the walls. The things are amazing, even a beautiful Sonja doll. This Christmas past it was joined by the gift of a Wizard doll, just as handsome.

The second part of the show was shot later in the week at the big Philly Con. They incorporated the Show and dynamite interviews with the girls. The result was the best thing to happen to Sonja so far – Coast to Coast – we were very lucky.

The same weekend *Newsweek* film service did an interview with the Wizard. They service 100 stations. I still hear from people who've seen that show.

Wendy Pini was on the *Mike Douglas* show the Wednesday before the Con. She was in costume, and a sensation, as usual.

Plus there have been any number of local shows – we've been on Boston, Philadelphia, and now we'll be on this New York thing which is just a little snip, but I think there's gonna be a lot more of that.

So what can I tell you, when you get lifted up like that. A poor slob who's never done any of that, and all of a sudden, now what can I tell you?

I must say, I loved her before, though, and I couldn't love her more, my love could not be increased, but I appreciate what Sonja has done. And oddly, I did the second book of Sonja, I was working on the third, and I got a letter, a very scholarly letter, from a fellow who was a philosophy teacher in Louisiana, and he said, "You now have Sonja. But beware – she has the power to lift you to the stars and to destroy you." And so far, Sonja has lifted me pretty high. (Laughs.)

We've gone up to Boston in a plane, we've flown there a couple of times, they pay the bills . . . I might add that they don't pay us to do the show, but they pay everything else, which is all right,

we do it for fun.

But while I was doing *Tomahawk*, I never got three inches off the ground. If I jumped up, that would be it. So we're dealing with a phenomenon here, and I think we're dealing with a phenomenon that goes even beyond comicdom. I think there's a potential, because we've had *Crawdaddy*, we've had *Circus*, we've had *Esquire* magazine handle this, we had *Oui* magazine did a piece, *Playboy* is interested in doing something with us.

So there's a general interest in the media, She's a natural. You know, you could write some of the stuff. We're looking for somebody to do something for *Ms.* magazine. *(Margaret does a double-take.)* Really.

THS: (enthusiastically) Really? That would be nice.

FRANK: And also, it just sprang to be. The media — when we were in Philadelphia, we were on three television stations, we were on the front page of the Philadelphia *Inquirer*. We came out Saturday morning, after the Phil Seuling con, and there's one of those kiosks in the center of town where they sell newspapers. Red Sonja was on the front page — myself, Wendy and Angie — of the *Inquirer*. We were on the front page of the *Planet*, and we were on the front page of the *Drummer*, in color — every one had Red Sonja.

THS: My God.

FRANK: And she just swept through that — and we were hauled back and forth to television studios —

MARILYN: We were all over the place. We were on the news, we were on —

FRANK: It was wonderful. We were on radio shows.

MARILYN: He turned down the mayor! The mayor asked him to attend a Fourth of July celebration. He says, "No, I've gotta be at my Sonja convention." I mean, how do you have the nerve to turn down the mayor?

FRANK: Yeah, he called. He'd seen us on the Stanley Spivak Show, and he called and invited the Wizard to come to the mayor's mansion and view the fireworks. Now ain't that something?

ANGELIQUE: Slowly but surely he got together his Sonja show. I don't know how it really started to formulate.

FRANK: But she's — this is the first Red Sonja right here (i.e. Angelique). The sonja shows originated in a nightclub in Jersey, Lily Langtry's. I had never met Angelique before, this was pre-Wizard days, so I don't know how I contacted her, I guess I must have called —

ANGELIQUE: I called you, or our friend who gave you the pictures of me told me that you were doing the character, and you know, it was such a great compliment, so I called and I said, "Hi, is this Frank Thorne?" "Yes!" And I go "Oh!" — that voice, he's such an enthusiast, as you might have noticed.

THS: (grinning) Yes.

ANGELIQUE: He carried on like crazy, and he says, "We're having this thing at Lily Langtry's, we're gonna premiere the song ("The Ballad of Red Sonja"), would you like to come down?" And I said, "All right," so here I was in the middle of Jersey in the middle of the night in this silver outfit —

FRANK: Yeah, but this was something. I saw my first Red Sonja live, and I invoked her the same as the show here. I said, "Come, Sonja" —

ANGELIQUE: But he had no wizard costume. I suggested it to him, "You know, with your hair and beard, you're a natural to do something in that vein, if you're going to do an invocation-type character." 'Cause we had no rehearsal time whatsoever, he just said, "I'll invoke you, and I'll try to keep you under control so you won't slash the whole audience to bits."

The funny thing is, though, the way I play Sonja, you don't have to worry about me slashing the audience to bits, they gotta worry about me getting dirty, the risque Sonja. They'll say something, with the questions, they'll go, "How long is your sword?" (In a Mae Westish voice) "Long enough."

In the show I noticed that Frank was adding a lot more lighter moments. That was very effective, I liked that. The first time I saw it the whole show was just, like, dancing.

FRANK: Well, she was sensational. She came out of the blackness at the back in this nightclub, the first time I ever saw the creation in the flesh, and she comes snake-hippin' out with that sword like this (extends arms in front of him) – it was incredible.

ANGELIQUE: (in Mae West voice) "Make way." (Laughter) Mae West came as an accident, 'cause I was driving with him to Philly for the convention and he says, "Listen, Angie, we got a whole bunch of Sonjas, and all the Sonjas do something." And I go, "Oh! You didn't say that!" And he says, "Yeah, Linda Behrle has a sword fight with her boyfriend, he gets dressed up with a cowl, that's really good, and Diane DeKelb, playing Rogatina, who's a different version of Sonja, she has a sword and quarterstaff fight with her boyfriend."

And I said, "Well, maybe I can dance." "No," he says, "Wendy Pini is doing a sword dance." "Oh well." So I said, "What am I gonna do? All I can do is Mae West imitations!" BOOM! And that started a whole new addition to the character. It went over well, which is what I was glad about.

FRANK: Yes. So now I'm doing a 15 page version of the Red Sonja show with the five Sonjas for *The Savage Sword of Conan.*

ANGELIQUE: You'll love his exit.

FRANK: I disappear at the end.

ANGELIQUE: He goes right in his hat! One of them comes over and she kicks the hat over and says, "Let's have a tankard of ale!"

FRANK: But, we'll have five pages of photographs and then I'll write some mad prose, 400 words, then there's the 15 page Sonja story, which will be unique, I think, and a first for comics.

ANGELIQUE: I think it'll be wonderful. Which *Savage Sword* is this?

FRANK: *Savage Sword of Conan* #29, May 1978.

ANGELIQUE: I don't know how he does it. Marilyn doesn't even know it. He is a wizard. He really is a wizard, because he'll sit there, and he creates like crazy, and he always tries to plan out two or three issues in advance, then he's got four conventions, and this and that, and who knows what, and then he's got a radio show to go to, and he's publicing his Sonja

FRANK: Well, it only happens once in a lifetime. It ain't gonna happen again. I realize that. So we're taking as much advantage of it as we can. It's not opportunism, it's just a celebration.

You had a question, didn't you? You never got to your second question!

THS: You've already answered about half of the ones I wrote down!

ANGELIQUE: I do the same thing with my interviewers, you know, when I go on – "Are there any more questions?" "No, you answered everything."

FRANK: You know, Margaret's with the Comics Heroines –

THS: Fan Club.

FRANK: This is the core, the hard core.

ANGELIQUE: Oh, where are they? New York, New Jersey?

FRANK: Oh, they have a fanzine, a very good fanzine.

ANGELIQUE: Relating to the – ?

FRANK: All comic heroines.

THS: And we're going to have an issue that's all about Red Sonja. I don't know how soon it's gonna come out.

ANGELIQUE: That's good. That's one of the things about Sonja that's good. She's not just one of these cardboard heroines – (pointing to big stand-up Sonja poster behind the table) - that's about the only cardboard she gets.

All right, she's sexy, she's beautiful, but she's got a lot of heart, a lot of soul in her. And this gets her into a lot of trouble, 'cause she should be minding her own business, and she'll see some poor slob being mistreated by another slob, and she will not let them do it. BAM! and BOOM! and she gets it.

'Cause she doesn't believe in people being chained and hurt and treated badly like that. She

wishes all people could be nice — "I hate arrogant men, I hate people to be like that" – that's her feelings, in many ways. There's one scene in the new issue where she comes to this guy's camp, this soldier. He's starting to respect her, he says, "She's as good as any soldier," and stuff, and they take her to his bordello or his harem or something like that. All the women are laying there very listless, and she says, "You think it's an honor to be a slave?" And BANG! she hits those chains.

THS: Yeah, that's one point that bothered me a little. It was very good what she did, but how could she smash iron chains with a sword?

FRANK: It was very carefully stated by Clair Noto – Sonja's co-authored by a woman – that they were delicate black chains.

ANGELIQUE: Very tiny thin ones.

FRANK: And she hit the central column, it released all of them.

THS: Oh, I see.

ANGELIQUE: Well, Sonja's got a good strong arm. Don't underestimate her. She's been known to demolish quite a few things in her time. In fact, I read Wendy Pini's letter that she wrote in answer to that woman – remember the one?

FRANK: Yeah.

ANGELIQUE: This one particular lady, she writes and says, "I think it's disgusting, it's appealing to all the chavinist pigs in fandom, and you dirty old man!" So Wendy wrote and said, "I feel like it's been a personal attack against me, for one, and I'm gonna write back," and she wrote this lovely letter, and she just summed up basically how she felt about Sonja personally, how Sonja is viewed in one respect. And if you've got a lecherous mind, anything is dirty – Supergirl, with all her clothes on, is dirty.

THS: Well, the way some of the artists draw her, she certainly is!

ANGELIQUE: You know, technically there's about three or four of us Sonjas roving around, and each of us has a claim on her. I am the face, the head – my hair, my wig, with the eyes, I made them dark, that's the first inspiration –

THS: Yeah, I know – as soon as you came up there (after the show) with those eyes, I knew it.

ANGELIQUE: I told you, that's my trademark. And this part here, the body, belongs to Linda Behrle – you know, the boom, da-dum, vaboom, like that.

And Wendy Pini – she's beautiful, and she photographs great, which is good because its important to have if you're gonna have a good Sonja – she embodies that soul, that spirit of Sonja.

And you have to take my thing, not only am I the head, I kinda think I'm Sonja's humor, I'm that humor present when she gets into – not exactly being mean, but when she takes it like a man, jokingly with the other boys, you know – "You know what I mean, fellas, let's see what the guys in the back room will have." You know, she's got that kind of – 'cause Mae West was kind of a Sonja type of character. Now, you know, she didn't run around with a sword, she had something better, her wit, which is just as sharp, and she dealt with men on their level, in many ways, and she pretty much can do whatever she wants to do, and she was never controlled by a man – she was always calling the shots with the men, you know, that was her shtick with them.

So I felt I was justified in using – saying, "Oh, my God, Mae West, she's so sexy, she's not at all like Sonja." And then I explain to them, you know, I've got a point, 'cause she did relate in many ways – how to get around men in their so-called men's world. That was the fun of it. So I do Mae West. It just sort of falls into the natural – what I was able to do at the spur of the moment.

Now people expect it – "Go ahead, do Mae Sonja." "Mae Sonja? All right." Or I do him (Frank) a card for Halloween – Sonja goes West for Halloween, I had her with a big hat and feathers, and the facial expression. And it's so much fun to just kick around like that for a while.

And he's funny, when he gets up there and – when I do any character for a long period of time, I start getting very much the feel of doing the character, I start feeling the way they feel. When I do Mae West, especially with that accent, it becomes very subjective. People ask me questions, and I'll just answer them completely in Mae West terminology. And people will say things to me, and he says to me something in the line of, "Oh, that's a great temptation, " and I go "Oh,

ANGELIQUE TROUVERE

that's a great temptation," and I go, "Oh, I just love a temptation." It just fell into line very well, like it was meant to.

We have so much fun – that's one good thing about Sonja, that's what everybody ever asks us, "What do you like best about Sonja?" She has this magic power – she brings together all these beautiful people, and we sit down, and go all bananas, you know. And he's great, his wife's great, his family, his kids – everybody's into the Sonja thing, his oldest daughter, her room is decorated with the Sonja posters, she sleeps with Sonja all over the place – now don't take that the wrong way. (Laughter)

FRANK: Well, you should see the doll that Angelique made – she made a magnificent doll of Red Sonja – that's our treasure, it's a perfect replica of her.

ANGELIQUE: That's the first time I did that, I bought a red wig and put it on the doll. It was one of those boudoir dolls, with a cute face, and they usually cover it up, and I had to take if off and paint it flesh color, you know.

FRANK: It has the swords, and the dagger, and the whole thing.

ANGELIQUE: Yes, I went to a minature place and got my little sword.

FRANK: Very intricate detail.

ANGELIQUE: I did the best I could, because I was so fond of it. It starts me off on a whole new gig, you know. And it's like all of us contribute to Sonja's well-being, you could say – I mean Wendy Pini's always sending him stuff with pictures of Sonja, we all draw pictures on the outside of the envelope, trying to shock his postman.

FRANK: Yeah, and Angelique draws her –

ANGELIQUE: (striking a seductive pose) "Hi there. Make sure I get delivered, will ya?"

THS: (Laughing) Well, you can be sure your mail will never be misdelivered, anyway!

ANGELIQUE: It takes a little longer getting there, everybody in the post office is going through it, you know. And he gets letters from men a lot – "How do you do it, Frank, how do you get these girls to hang around you?" "Well, just draw a comic book character, that's all." It just happens that way, because she's just so much more than a flat character, she's something that jumps out of the pages and you wanna know her, and you wanna know what makes this lady tick, and there's so much to know about her, and this indomitable spirit that isn't going to be kissy-poo at one point, you know, that kind of thing – she's always on the ball, she's always in there kicking away, and she's fighting – and I like a fighter. You know, "I like a girl with spirit," they always say. They don't mean it, those guys, you know, they never mean it.

FRANK: Yes, Angelique has 14 cats, you know, the fourteenth one's name is Louie. So she has to defend them, you see, 'cause anyone who has 14 cats must be a fighter (laughs) and she says, "Oh, you better watch out," so that's where it comes in handy to know how to wield a sword.

Now, next question, Margaret.

THS: Okay, one of the most important questions I was going to ask you is, since Sonja's so popular, why is her book still only bi-monthly? Is it because it takes so long to do the drawings, or the script, or what?

FRANK: Well, actually, it's very simple. *Wonder Woman* is a marginal seller as a monthly comic. Heroines in comics do not sell as many comic books as heroes. Never have. Until Sonja, Marvel Comics never had a heroine who sold.

THS: How do you make those costumes? I couldn't figure out what they were made out of.

ANGELIQUE: Well, each girl uses whatever she can. I've seen one girl make it out of coins, which is a complete no–no, because that's what belly dancers use, and Sonja does not belly dance.

THS: No, definitely not.

ANGELIQUE: You wanna keep her out of that vein entirely. And, let me see, some people – now, Wendy Pini's, hers are made out of metal slugs, which her husband had to drill little holes in and then she sewed on, and the costume weighs about 10 pounds. And she actually made the metal piece (i.e. the shoulder armor), and it fits her shoulders really beautifully. That's part of the secret – it's gotta hold just beautifully, or else it really falls apart, and that's the problem I had.

My first one was made with sequins, with buckram – you know, epaulets, cut out – and that worked out pretty good. But then, I guess, when you look at all that metal and stuff, and that authenticity starts showing through, so then we all sort of got on the bandwagon and said, "Ah! We gotta make a metal costume." And is that ever hard. So I bought these large slugs, which are about the size of a quarter, put the holes in myself and sewed them on. They weren't too bad, except they didn't come silver, the came copper.

THS: Oh no.

ANGELIQUE: So I had to spray the costume before I wore it. And this eventually didn't work out too well. The slugs would be turned copper by the air, so eventually I said, "That's no good." So I was passing by a button shop one day, and I saw these buttons, and I said, "Shanks? Buttons? I'll do it!" And I ran out.

So then the shank buttons worked quite well, and then eventually I drafted - it took about three weeks to draft an actual wire frame of the epaulets, which I then covered with papier mache. And that's what I've been using so far. And eventually I'll find somebody in a metal shop who will help me and make a costume for me. But that's what it looks like now, with the changes. (Showing a picture of herself in Sonja costume from her portfolio.)

THS: That's pretty good.

ANGELIQUE: They came out fairly nice. If these slugs didn't need to be painted it probably would be like that (another picture). These shanks work out quite nicely, too, except you have to really sew them down tight and then glue them, 'cause they really jingle a lot – how she sneaks up on anybody I'll never know.

I'll tell you, this costume has been an experience – I've made it over about three or four times. And each time it's become more and more of an experience, between the working with the metal and then, like, making boots. Who ever knew you were gonna make boots? You have to make these boots here, you see, they are highly unusual.

And you're trying to figure out how to make it, and so what I used was a pair of Capezios ballet slippers, and then added this little cuff with buckram, and then this part (i.e. the calf) is like a sock I had to put on first. And I always add – my signature is always a couple of aurora borealises sewn someplace in there, 'cause I like the sparkling and stuff. And then these cuffs here (at the top) have to be added and specially cut, but these are elastic bands. And it's a headache, as you're trying to really got it together – you haven't the faintest idea what you're doing, I never studied Basic Bootmaking, I was sick that term.

THS: (Laughs)

ANGELIQUE: And the gloves were another problem, because you don't get gloves like this, you don't even get gloves with this sort of nice gauntlet effect. So what we usually have to do is buy a long pair of gloves, and I add a gaudette, a little triangle, to extend it, and then I add this section (the cut-out along the cuff) out.

You're trying very hard to get as close as you can, because the closer it looks to the picture, the more it convinces the people, and the more you feel like the character, too, a lot of times the costume can help to get the character over.

Like this part here this was a murderous armband, to get that exactly as he had drawn it. There was nothing like that on the market. So eventually I did it once out of plastic bracelets. Well, it wasn't that bad, but it wasn't that good. And then eventually I came across some gold braid, which looks very heavy, and you wrap it around – it's braid, it's marvelous. It just worked out, so I got lucky. This one here (the other armband) – I did my first piece of metal jewelry. I cut it out, and I cut this piece out, filed it out, put the stone on it, da da. And it looks very good.

FRANK: (returning from signing autographs) All right, next question.

THE WIZARD & RED SONJA SHOW

THS: You were in the middle of a question when we were interrupted by the tape running out. It was why Sonja's book is stll only bi-monthly.

FRANK: Phenomenally, Red Sonja, as a bi-monthly, sells neck and neck with Wonder Woman and occasionally outsells her, without any television show. Now why is that? The reason is that –

THS: It's a better book!

FRANK: Well, thank you for that, I'd prefer to think that. I think it's a better character all-around, but because of merchandising and so forth, Wonder Woman is a monthly book. And that – actually it doesn't increase its sales potential, it decreases it. It would be a stronger book as a bi-monthly. Of course that's very wise at Marvel in that they keep it as a solid bi-monthly book. (*Ms. Marvel*, which they've been pushing as a monthly, has been selling at only 38 or 39, and is soon to be pushed back to bi-monthly status. - Margaret) She (Sonja) has had issues where she came in two points behind the duck, Howard the Duck.

THS: Oh my God.

FRANK: And of course *Red Sonja* #1 sold at 49.3%, which is right in with *Spider-Man*.*

But of course she went down again, she's now somewhere around 43, 42, and she goes to 43 and back down like that. So Roy says, "Don't worry, we're not worried." Historically, as I said, Conan didn't take off until issue #20 or so, and they're hoping that Sonja does the same.

But in the meantime, there's such enormous potential for merchandising, for films and so forth, that they wouldn't cancel that book under pain of death at this point. Early on, when we did the poster, the Red Sonja poster, it had to be approved by Columbia Pictures, who owns all the rights to all these things, all the merchandising rights. So I had submitted my sketch and Ed Justin was the VP at Columbia, he calls. And he says, "I want to see you, come on in." So I said, "Roy, do you know what happened? Ed Justin just called me."

So Roy and I went in and sat in his office. We had the Sonja poster sketch there, and he looked at it and he said, "Hmm! You're gonna make a lot of money, and we're gonna make a lot of money, 'cause this is dynamite," and he oughta know.

But he thought I worked for Marvel and owned – was a Marvel representative, which I was not, so Roy and I slouched out of there and we looked at each other and said, "Jesus, we don't own one of her disks!"

And there's the thing again – how can I cash in on this? How can I as an artist do better than just getting paid full-page rate? So the idea of the wizard, and the show, and the girls – what I'm doing is creating an enormous demand for, for instance, artwork. There is no original artwork at all of Red Sonja. I've held it all, hoping to keep the price up when I do sell.

And I did one rather elaborate color drawing of Sonja that went to the Chicago Con, it was auctioned off by Stan Lee and it – the only higher piece that went was a Bill Mauldin World War II

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* *This means that 49.3%, or roughly half, of the regular print run of 300,000 was sold.*

Keeping in mind the fact that, up til now, heroines haven't sold as well as heroes. Sonja may jolly well change that, but only passing time will tell. The two genders in comic books cannot be judged by the same scale. If Sonja found her level at about 45% it would be sensational. That's where I'd like her to be. She'd still be three or four points behind Conan, but by the aforementioned standards, a miracle.

Another aspect of this percentage game are Direct Sales. Not to be confused with newsstand distribution. Direct Sales involve the huge quantity of books that go to guys like Phil Seuling, Ivan Snyder and many book stores that buy direct from Marvel. These figures never are shown in the regular percentage reports. The actual sale of a book can be twenty percent higher if the direct sales were calculated! Sonja, being a very hot book on the comic book store racks, falls into this category.

Comparing Red Sonja with Wonder Woman is not odious from Sonja's standpoint. The last figures I saw on W.W. put her at around 112,000 in sales. It would be correct to assume that the press run was 300,000. Sonja does that easily on most issues, much better as a rule. Amazing when you consider the W.W. TV show. It is still a question how much TV exposure helps sell books.

Finally, some books have been cancelled at 42% or 43%. Many factors come into play. Potential. The seasonal aspects of sales. Difficulty with the creative team. All these angles are being constantly monitored by the administrative people. - Frank Thorne

Pulitzer Prize cartoon.

THS: (Incredulous gasp) Oh my God!

FRANK: For 400 dollars, 350, and Sonja went for 200 dollars. And the lady that bought it wrote me a letter, and I saved it, and it's one of my treasures. And she also made the Chicago *News* – wherever the character goes, there you are.

ANGELIQUE: (sarcastically) Unfortunately, she's too sexual, too sexist, or something.

FRANK: Well, for certain people, yes. But there's a bizarre quality about it.

ANGELIQUE: Well, I guess he doesn't care what kind of publicity she gets as long as she gets it.

FRANK: Next question, Margaret.

THS: All right. Is there any particular reason that they picked you to be Sonja's regular artist?

FRANK: Well, I was free at the time. Atlas – I was at Atlas doing Son of Dracula, and covers, and so forth. Roy just gave me a call, and it was an opening. They knew I was free at that time, because of the collapse of Goodman's attempt to re-enter the comic market. So I went in not knowing, as I said before. So it was no more than that. It's just being available. There's not that many top guys, real working pros, around, there's a lot of younger fellows.

I think they had a lot of thrust, a lot of hope, for Sonja to do something, they didn't want to give it to a kid. They wanted somebody more seasoned. Oddly, I'd never drawn a woman before. I had only drawn Korak, son of Tarzan. He was the closest I ever came. He looked like a girl. So that's the closest I had ever come. And here we are. Next question!

THS: All right, do you want to make a grand philosophical statement about what Sonja represents, or anything like that?

FRANK: Well, Sonja represents – let's see. There was a woman in Beethoven's life, wasn't there, a dark woman of mystery, and – who was it? Beatrice? Beatrice was –

THS: Dante.

FRANK: Right, Dante's Beatrice. Do you see what I'm thinking?

I'm beginning to etch this. She is this personage to me. One of Mozart's string quartets is a magnificent quartet, and it comes along in a joyous manner, but he's supposed to have been in love at that time, and he's upposed to have been moved. And it's one of the most moving quartets that he wrote, and he lifts you up, and he breaks your heart. And it's a magical thing. And they said it was beyond his ken – it was a string quartet that was inspired by a woman, you see. And I think this is what Sonja's given me. She's my Beatrice, she's my Laura, and she's that mysterious woman in Mozart's life that inspires you to great heights, mysteriously so. There's just – like mysticism here. I'm a mystic anyway, so I'm carrying on. Forget everything I've said. (Laughter)

THS: (grinning) The tape recorder won't. Just what is Roy Thomas doing on the book anyway?

FRANK: Roy is editor and co-writer. He works mostly with Clair Noto, who is excellent. Wendy Pini did one issue with Roy.

ANGELIQUE: The new talent of Wendy Pini gave her a fresh new aspect.

THS: I think you can see the difference when a woman is co-writing it. Like for instance with that incident in *Red Sonja* #8, when she smashed the harem women's chains. Because with a male writer they usually don't think of things like that.

ANGELIQUE: Yeah, they're going to think, "You didn't enjoy that?" And also the character – you did read the story then – the king himself, he's a handsome guy, he says, "I'm gonna make her mine," he's already got plans for this lady, but she's got different plans. So this is going to lead up to a whole new set of adventures. Frank, do you actually suggest stories?

FRANK: Clair plots it. Well, I work with her. She gives me a very rough breakdown, a very rough plot. The Marvel technique is they let the artist do all the fight scenes and create the characters. She gives me a bare bones plot, two pages, like "what if – ?" and so forth, and what I create is a silent movie. In return I give her, I draw the whole book in a kind of sketchy rough breakdown, and create all the fight scenes, and do all the spooky stuff, and whatever. Then she and Roy lay my version down and just type in the words. So that it has a flow to it.

Kirby and Stan Lee developed this technique years ago, in the sixties. I work very well under

that. I love it, 'cause I write some of the stuff. I have written over the years certain stuff; the Dr. Bennett strip, and I've written this particular issue of *Savage Sword of Conan* (#29), that whole show will be mine. So I'm sort of a frustrated writer, too – frustrated actor, frustrated everything. Next question.

THS: Well, in connection with that, in the latest issue of *FOOM*, in the Department of InFOOMation, Roy Thomas said something about there was going to be a regular back-up feature of Red Sonja in *Savage Sword of Conan* –

FRANK: (amazed) He did!

THS: You mean he didn't tell you? (Laughter) I was going to ask – it said some of the stories were going to be done by you –

FRANK: Yeah, right. I have a trilogy by Kristy Marx, there's a trilogy that she wrote that I'll be doing when I finish the Sonja story, which will keep me busy. But other than – I know Howie Chaykin has done one, and I don't know whether Giordano has actually started one yet. I wonder about Dick Fields – he had a chance to do it.

THS: Okay, you said in the Sonjacon book that Red Sonja was already disturbing your contemplative lifestyle. Has this increased?

FRANK: Utterly shattered it. To some degree that philosophy professor was correct when he said that she had the power to destroy me, because you're looking at a guy that's about at the end of my rope. I'm exhausted.

And this particular convention – working as a promoter is absolutely uplifting, but it's absolutely tiring, 'cause I'm dealing with many people all the time. Just getting this little time that we had on television (on Eyewitness News), I've been working months. And the ABC people are particularly interested in it.

And these television producers will take anything from you – I've given them t-shirts, I write them, call them – we're on the brink of something here. And they keep telling me – we've got a fellow who's a TV producer who's a friend of ours, John DeWitt, and he called me last night, and he tells me, "You're on you're scheduled for Saturday!"

ANGELIQUE: When?! Where?!

FRANK: He says, "You gotta call Joe Crisea this morning and tell him you're gonna be there – " Of course what they did, they got here so late that they couldn't do anything really extensive.

Just this aspect, not only drawing it, but being so emotionally involved, so – pulling all of it together and thrusting it on – I live and breathe the character, I just can't get away from it. And I don't mind it. But in order to do it, it has to be done right and it just has to consume one person's entire life, which is what it's doing right now. But I'm enjoying it.

ANGELIQUE: I was talking to someone once, and I said something like, "Red Sonja is very important in Frank Thorne's life, but Frank Thorne is very important to the life of Red Sonja." 'Cause without his efforts she couldn't – well, she could do very well, but he helps her along so well –

MARILYN: Amen! Amen! Amen!

ANGELIQUE: People see that crazy (wizard's) hat, they see that beard, and they go, "Red Sonja's old man!"

MARILYN: It's true! It's true! It's true!

ANGELIQUE: That's his wife back there.

THS: I know.

ANGELIQUE: It's quite a family. You know, I've seen people who get involved with their characters and stuff, and they're marvelous, but their family is like, "Oh, that's his hobby, he's so weird." But his whole family, from his wife to –

FRANK: (Laughing) The whole family's weird!

ANGELIQUE: – to his tiny little two-year-old granddaughter, are into Sonja. She calls her "Sue-Sue, Sue-Sue." She sees her on the TV – "Sue-Sue! Sue-Sue!"

I tell you, you gotta bring her to the convention. Bring her for the costume parade, I'll make

her a whole Red Sonja outfit – "Baby Sonja"! It'll be hysterical!

There are so many funny aspects of the character you can get into. The whole family justs gets off on it. We all sat there – there was a piece on *Evening Magazine* which was shown on Ch. 3 out of Philadelphia, in which they reported part of the Sonja show and interviewed us. And we all sat there, holding hands – "Look at us, we're on TV!" Oh, God, it's madness! I mean after that we felt like we ran the mile! And we made a whole holiday of it.

And a wonderful thing also, the esprit de corps, you know, where all of us Sonjas would be standing there and one would say, "Hey, listen, let's do this!" and no "Now what do you mean by that?" BOOM! We just did it. And everybody did it like you rehearsed it twenty-five times, this first time we did the Sonja show – I mean, it looked like we'd been rehearsing it for years. You know, everybody looked cute – "Walk up real slow."

That's how you have to do it, to basically suggest the idea and everybody – we chased Frank off. He started fumbling around, and we were getting fed up with this little wizard, this little twerpy wizard, and we said, "That's it!" And we took out our swords, and he jumped off the stage and ran – we ran after him with swords drawn.

That's how we got out of that one. The hard thing is to end the thing, 'cause people are having such a good time they don't want it to end. Of course we had to eat sometime! But you can just have a good time with the character, bringing her to the people.

The most fun I have is when the small children come up to me – "Ohh! It's Sonja! Can I touch your sword, please?" And it's a heavy sword. And they go, "Ohh! It's real!" and they love it. And you can imagine they go to their school on Monday morning – "I met Red Sonja!" And they go, "Sure you did, kid, sure you did."

But it's important for children to have a lot of fantasy in their lives. 'Cause people say, "A kid's gotta grow up fast, gotta learn the street, gotta learn to deal with people." Hey, that's what childhood's for, it's having a ball every once in a while. That's what I like about *Star Wars*, too. It's like the director said, "I wanted to bring a lot of fantasy to the life of today's kids." What are they getting – Kojak, Dirty Harry?

It's like the regular feeling at a party – it's not just a Sonja convention, it's party time! He used to call me up and say, "Angie, come down to Jersey." And I go to Rahway, New Jersey, in this little yellow Volkswagen, and he takes my bag, and off we go into the merry land of Oz.

And he does this other character, Danger Rangerette, which he draws for the *National Lampoon*. It's someone else's idea, but he draws it. Oh, it's so funny. That girl Linda Behrle – he's like using her as a model type, with the big eyes and the blonde hair and the boobs out to God knows where, and she had the costume specially made and she has the spirit gum all over the place, I mean it's hanging out practically, but not quite. And you see this marvelous acting ability coming out of him, you know, when you see him on stage, and he goes nutso! And then he does this thing, what is it, Barf Beltless?

FRANK: Yeah, Barf Beltless.

ANGELIQUE: With Danger, and he gets dressed up with the buckskins with the boots. He says, "I haven't seen a woman in 28 years." Danger comes boppin' about. "That ain't no chipmunk!"

It's just so much fun for everyone involved. We try to make the audience have as much fun as we are. I think that your magazine readers – what kind of people do you have, college people?

THS: I'm a little unsure.

ANGELIQUE: Are they mostly female, would you say?

THS: No, um . . . (In the midst of my attempt to explain the CHFC, Frank gets up, about to leave. Remember, this interview started in the late afternoon, and by this time it's almost six o'clock and the Thornes want to eat dinner.)

ANGELIQUE: Have you got another question?

FRANK: How could you ask another question? There couldn't be anything left!

THS: No, I guess not. Thank you very much, Angelique.

FRANK: Okay, how about Wendy Pini? Can you get her on the tape? Wendy, you're next.

(Part III of "The Great Red Sonja Interview" begins on page 31)

THE HEROINE REVUE

Marvelous Magic-Makers

by Scott Gibson

"What we think is one world is really two worlds, say those who wear peaked caps and flapping capes – those who see destiny written in cryptic codes, and in strange, sinister symbols! There is a creepy, terrifying second world *– a shadowy realm of unreal things, inexplicable events . . . black magic – as you'll find out when you meet . . . THE ENCHANTRESS OF TERROR CASTLE."*

So ran the prologue to the adventure which introduced the Switcheroo-Witcheroo, The En-Chantress to the world in *Strange Adventures* #187 in April of 1966. As the tale opened, a young, free-lance artist named June Moone and her boyfried Alan Dell were driving through secluded woods to an old estate, having received a cryptic invitation to a party being held there. As they arrived, two bizarre statues – one a gargoyle, the other a griffin – came to life and charged towards their car. But the creatures then unmasked, revealing themselves to be ordinary men who informed Alan and June that they were just the "welcoming committee" and that this was a masquerade party. Told that they would be given costumes inside, the couple proceeded to enter the castle. A curious sight greeted their eyes. Under flickering torches, guests cavorted in eerie outfits. A large tapestry depicting a menacing minotaur decorated one wall.

Suddenly, someone struck a gong. Instantly, a chilly wind began to whip through the vast halls of the castle, blowing out the torches and leaving the guests in darkness. The doors slammed shut and then the figure of the minotaur in the tapestry began to glow. Wicked, unearthly laughter cut through the frightened cries of the partygoers. June, separated from Alan, pressed against one of the walls, only to fall through a secret panel into a small, candlelit room even more bizarre than the one she had just left. Macabre statues and figures decorated the place. From the lips of one still figure came a voice commanding June to listen.

Ms. Moone, more angry than frightened, was flippant. "It talks! I get it – a hidden mike . . . The joint's bugged! . . . Okay, I'll play the ghost-game. What cooks next?"

The voice warned her of an evil presence which lurked within the castle, and in a scene borrowed directly from Captain Marvel, gave her the powers to deal with the menace. If she would but repeat the words "The Enchantress," a bolt of green lightning struck, and in demure, blond, blue-eyed June's place stood a raven-haired figure in a mod green mini-skirt, boots, cape and stylish emerald witch's hat. "My hair! My eyes! This . . . costume! I have changed! Now . . . the first thing to do is get out of here and help Alan and the others!"

To her surprise, The Enchantress discovered she could walk right through walls. Back in the ballroom, after calming the hysterical crowd, her first feat was to cast a spell on a suit of armor, causing it to grow, supporting the crumbling ceiling. Then she learned from two of the costumed party-goers who had planned the whole thing that they had been responsible for all of the ghostly effects *except* for those which occurred *after* the gong had been struck. Using what she termed her "witch's intuition," The Enchantress determined that another sounding of the gong would restore normalcy and trap the evil spirits in the tapestry once more. Accomplishing this and seeing all of the guests safely out of the castle, The Sorceress "willed" herself back to her June Moone form, and escaped with no time to spare before the castle came crashing down. The final panel of this 9 page story saw June and Alan driving away, with star-struck Alan extolling the virtues of his new idol The Enchantress, leaving June to decide it she could be jealous of – herself!

The "Switcheroo-Witcheroo," as she was dubbed reappeared for months later in *Strange Adventures* #191 (August, 1966). "Beauty vs. The Beast" saw Enchantress battling a gigantic creature which had suddenly appeared out of a geyser. The monstrosity did not appear to be evil, but caused much destruction as it moved westward, following and reaching for the sun. The Wondrous Witch's powers were unable to affect the creature, but she was finally able to lure it into a rocket at Cape Kennedy which was blasting off for Venus.

It was a full nine months later before the Enchantress was off on her third case, one called "The Guardian Eye" in SA #200 (May, 1967). This 8 pager pitted her against another giant monster, but this one turned out to be a mirage. The real culprit was a jewel thief who utilized the illusion of the monstrous apparition to draw the attention of the police while he committed heists elsewhere. Once The Enchantress defeated this menace, she pulled the ultimate magic trick — disappearing from comics forever. Well, *almost* forever. Her first two adventures were reprinted in *Adventure Comics* #417,419. But it seems highly unlikely that this heroine will ever resurface again. She could probably have been a highly popular character had she been revived at the height of the mystery/ghost comics heydey in the early Seventies; now, however, The Enchantress has little to offer the comics-reading public. Anything she can do, Zatanna does better, with more style and versatility. Except for her fetching costume, little about The Enchantress is worth remembering. All of her adventures were poorly (and evidently hastily) plotted and scripted disasters which glossed over credibility and detail. They left numerous questions unanswered. To wit: Just exactly *what were* her powers and/or limitations? Where did they come from? More specifically, what was that ancient castle in *Strange Adventures* #187 doing in America? And why were June and Alan so eager to attend a party where they knew none of the guests or even who was giving the affair? No explanation was offered in #191 for why The Enchantress's powers were useless against the geyser-monster. And why did there just happen to be a compartment large enough in the Venus-bound rocket to accomodate the hundred-foot tall beast? Minor points such as these tended to stretch the stories' credibility.

None of the adventures carried credits, but the scripting has been attributed to Arnold Drake. The art on the first and last was done by long time DC and Golden Age artist Howard Purcell. The art on the second adventure was done by Jay Scott Pike, remembered for his work on Jann of the Jungle and the Dolphin. The editor was Jack Schiff. For better or worse, The Switcheroo-Witcheroo has reserved a place for herself in the vast Hall of Heroines. Like the majority of those who came both before and after her, The Enchantress's career was an all-too-brief one, with a potential unrealized and largely unexplored.

* * * * *

The name of editor/writer/artist Mike Sekowsky always stirs up a sizable amount of controversy. But just as surely, the heroines with which he has been associated have never been accused of being dull. One of his lesser-known but finest creations was — MORGANA!

The daughter of sorceress Morgan LeFay, she made her inital appearance in *Wonder Woman* #186 (February, 1970), during Diana Prince's non-super period. In a tongue-in-cheek adventure, Diana's roommate Cathy Perkins and two girlfriends came across a book of black magic from which they began invoking old spells merely for amusement. Unfortunately, they summoned forth Morgana the Witch and her cat Frimost, who failed to see the humor in the situation and retaliated by turning one of the girl's boyfriends, Henry, into a frog. The girls fled to Diana and her mentor I-Ching for aid in defeating Morgana and restoring Henry to human form.

By the time Wonder Woman and Co. caught up with the mischievous magic-maker, the villainess was causing total chaos in the city streets. Actually, Morgana displayed a marvelous sense of humor — rather than looting and pillaging, she was just out for fun, and accomplished

this by doing such things as making a homely, overweight girl irresistable to men and releasing stuffed animals from a toy store because she hated to see animals locked up. The balance of the tale consisted mostly of Diana attempting to do battle with Morgana, who in turn used every magic trick in the book to avoid Di's clutches. It was I-Ching who finally defeated the red-tressed witch and banished her back to whatever dimension she called home. But readers - and Wonder Woman – had not seen the last of her.

In September of the same year, in *Adventure Comics* #397, Supergirl and Diana Prince found themselves up against Zond, a warlock so powerful that they decided that Morgana's help was required to defeat him. After her last bout with her foe, it seems truly incredible that WW would risk releasing such a potential menace on the world once more, especially when a super-heroine sorceress like Zatanna was surely available to them. But all worked well anyhow – Morgana was first enraged at seeing Diana once more, but when the two heroines explained and mentioned Zond, the flame-haired witch was only too happy to oblige, for it seemed that Zond had once been a stablehand for her mother and had only recently acquired magical prowess by stealing one of Morgan LeFay's sorcery books.

In a matter of just three pages, Supergirl, aided by Morgana, made short work of "that little grub." Morgana then returned to her own dimension, taking Zond to whatever punishment awaited him. This story introduced new costumes for both the Maid of Steel and Morgana, courtesy of Diana Prince and her boutique. Morgana had previously been depicted in a green, seventeenth-century English-style dress. Her new outfit was a chic black mini dress with walking cane and floppy black hat.

In a letter column sometime later, editor Sekowsky admitted that Morgana's reformation had been part of a plan by him to launch the character in a super-heroine series of her own. Unfortunately, the idea was stillborn. A shame, since the lady's wry sense of humor alone could have livened up a comic book con considerably. And since Morgana lived by whatever set of rules governed her in her own dimension, watching her make her way on Earth might have been very interesting. Maybe, someday, if some wise editor were only to whisper "Retragammaton," the incantation used to summon Morgana forth, we will yet get the opportunity to see her in action once more. And perhaps even have a confrontation with her mother, Morgan LeFay from *Demon* #1 (September, 1972).

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WENDY PINI

THE GREAT RED SONJA INTERVIEW – PART III

starring

Wendy (Red Sonja) Pini

by Margaret O'Connell

THS: Okay, how did you get involved in going around with this Sonja show?

WENDY: That's the question I always get asked first.

I met Frank at a convention in Boston. He apparently saw something in me that could be translated into Sonja, so he asked me to enter the Sonja lookalike contest. And I entered and I won. So that's one way to get established.

There's a kind of a chemistry between Frank and me – I don't know if you saw the stage show.

THS: Yeah, I did.

WENDY: It wasn't our best, because I was absolutely blind up there *(because of the too-glaring footlights - Margaret).* We shouldn't have gone onto the stage cold without a rehearsal, but we just didn't have time.

No, there's a kind of chemistry between Frank and me – I don't know. I understand Sonja very well, and so does Frank, and we can just kind of banter and bounce off one another. You know, a lot of what we do up on the stage is ad lib, depending on how the crowd feels.

But I believe in Sonja because she's more than just a comic book character. She's an individual with certain strengths and certain failings that make her a very interesting woman, and a three-dimensional character. This is what I try to express in the show.

There are many levels to Sonja. She's a free spirit, so she can dance. She's a bitter, embittered woman, which is expressed in that long monologue *(about the rape that brought Sonja's transformation from an ordinary girl to a woman warrior - Margaret).* People have a strange reaction to that. I usually expect applause or something, but usually people are kind of, "What are we listening to? This is a comic book character! What are we listening to? What are you doing to our little minds?"

It's heavy stuff, I know. But it is Sonja. She is that strong, and that bitter, and I feel it's a part of her. So she can be humorous – she kids the wizard, she kids men. But very ironic and sarcastic, of course. And I like portraying her because there are many qualities I find in her personality that I myself would like to have, and there are many faults she has that I find in my own personality. And I forgive myself for them and use them as part of the portrayal.

But that's how I became involved. It was just almost a natural thing to fall into, because Sonja is a natural type of character for me to play.

THS: Where did you get the sword?

WENDY: My husband built the sword. *(Note: Wendy's husband, Richard Pini, who goes around wearing a Red Sonja t-shirt with "No. 1 Wendy Pini Fan" in black letters on the back, also does the special lighting and slide show for the Sonja and the Wizard act.)* As a matter of fact, he helped me to build quite a bit of the costume. He drilled 500 holes in 500 solid steel disks, and I sewed them together, and he coated the armature for the shoulder guards with liquid steel – he really helped me build the costume.

THS: I really don't have that many questions to ask you, 'cause I didn't expect to be able to interview Red Sonja as well as Frank.

WENDY: Well – your magazine is based on heroines. Is it from a feminist point of view or simply from a point of view of –

THS: Aah . . . Well, that's a very good question. It's kind of a mishmash, actually. Because when I first heard about this magazine in a letter column in a comic I thought, "Great, it's feminist," and all this. Then I started seeing Letters to the Editor in comics from the then publisher of it and

people like that, and some of them seemed to be in it just for the girl-watching.

But when I finally got my hands on some of the issues – they're pretty good. They don't just treat the heroines as sex objects. Some of them are more openly feminist; some of them just seem to think heroines are good characters or something like that, without thinking too much about the feminist aspect, and they just say, "There aren't enough of them." But not for feminist reasons – just because they happen to like heroines.

The thing is that most comics fans are male, so most people who do fanzines are male. So only about 15% of the people who are members of this club are women anyway, so that's kind of reflected in the magazine to a certain extent.

WENDY: Yes, it's still a male-dominated interest. But more women are getting involved. I myself am going to have my own comic published in April. ("Elfquest" in *Fantasy Quarterly* #1, available from Independent Publishers Syndicate, P.O. Box 10029, Lansing, MI 48912, for $1.00.)

THS: Oh yeah, Frank said something about that.

WENDY: And that will be the first time a woman has had a continuing adventure strip.

THS: Is this going to be about a woman, or –

WENDY: Nope. I'm a people's-libber, so it's going to be about people, little fantasy people. It's going to be a fantasy-adventure theme. It's called "Elfquest." I guess you'd call it an elven "Roots." But you'll have to read it to form your own opinion about it.

Basically what I would be trying to do in my stories is to show how people, both male and female, would react in various situations, and not in any kind of stereotyped mold. I've drawn on my own experiences to write the stories, and turned them into fantasy tales. I take something that actually happened to me and just twist it around and change it to make it into a fantasy plot. It's like doing something personal and yet it's finding out another world.

But no, I'm a people's-libber, I'm not a feminist. I'm quite happily married. It's a give-and-take proposition, and I don't believe that women should dominate, or that men should dominate. I just think people should be happy.

You know, some comic book heroines lean in one direction. I think Sonja has a not entirely healthy point of view, because she's a very bitter woman who's been hurt very badly. And consequently, she's not whole herself, and so her point of view is a bit distorted. She overreacts, doesn't she?

THS: Yeah, I was kind of taken aback when I finally managed to get hold of the back issue with her origin story, I was really taken aback by that whole situation. First that they would – that something that graphic would be permitted to appear, even in a black & white magazine (which is not regulated by the Comics Code) –

WENDY: I thought it was very tastefully done, though.

THS: Yeah, right.

WENDY: And certainly it does happen, so it's valid.

THS: Oh yeah, sure. But also this whole thing with the sort of vow of chastity – In one way it's good, because it permits her to escape from the stereotype of the kind of woman who would be running around with these barbarian armies which you immediately form when you see, "Oh, she's running around with Conan."

But it also limits her, because the wording of the vow she took makes it impossible for her to get together with anyone even if there's love on both sides, not just one trying to dominate the other. In fact, the only way she can ever "love" any man, according to this vow, is if he conquers her in battle, which could be just as bad a situation for her as the original rape that this whole mystical experience was supposed to prevent her from ever experiencing again.

I can't think of any other character in comics – except Wonder Woman, of course – that has this kind of dead-end limitation imposed on them. Certainly it would be unthinkable for any male character to be stuck in a situation like this. And I really think it's almost the fatal flaw of the whole concept set out by the origin.

(At this tantalizing point, the tape ran out. Wendy really didn't seem to have much to say on this point anyway, so anyone roused to furious comment will have to address themselves to me.)

Margaret O'Connell, 19 Stuyvesant Oval, New York, NY 10009

Dear Steve,

Whooo-ee! Where did you folks dig up Lela Dowling?! The Cheshire Cat totally sent me! I always liked Tigra anyway, but the touches of Yes Album covers and "Hepzibah," of the Starjammers (see the X-Men) were perfect. I love it! Vampirella with bats in her hair wasn't bad, either. I expect to see a lot more of Lela Dowling's stuff, hear?

I also heartily approve of the current two-or-more-part Red Sonja interview. All that stuff you said in the last two pages, Margaret O'Connell, I couldn't agree with more. I already knew it, though not in those words. Women's Lib isn't about the right to get a divorce or good pay for a good job. Those issues are just the symptoms, and we need to cure the disease, not the symptoms. I've known many people to have involuntary fear reactions to Red Sonja, many of them close to me. My roommate here at college gasps at Sonja's costume. Now, mail bikinis aren't my style, but why shouldn't Red Sonja wear it if she wants to? The woman is a symbol of what Women's Lib is trying to do, even more than Wonder Woman. "Oldest may be coldest, too." As noted, many people are afraid of Red Sonja and what she stands for. Men laugh at "the chick with the sword" to cover their fear of women with swords. Does anyone remember Tomyris and Boadicia? They were Queens of the Celts, women who carried swords; they were my ancestors, folks – and you have no idea how I exult in seeing Red Sonja brandish her weapons. Two thousand years ago, that could have been me!

Well, now I've gotten carried away and off the subject. The point is that Red Sonja is a very important symbol in modern life, and one I value highly. Frank Thorne, whatever it is you're doing, keep on doing it.

Deby Dunn
Whitworth College
Box 291
Spokane, WA 99751

Dear Steven,

Thanks for the copy of *The Heroines Showcase* #12. It is indeed an honor to be part of your enthusiasm. Thanks also for putting the interview up front. The cover piece by Brent is a jewel.

Your fanzine is very important to me, for I love Sonja the most. And she belongs, historically, in this fanzine more than any other, at this point in her progress.

Of course, the BIGGEST news concerning Sonja is that Ace/Tempo will publish a series of paperback novels starring the one and only Red Sonja!

With the Conan movie coming along, the interest in sword and sorcery will be on the increase, and Sonja will be part of the celebration. She is, after all, the First Lady of Sword and Sorcery!

Another honor for Sonja: My next project will be a Red Sonja Super Special. Fifty pages in full process color. Sonja's book will be #4 or #5 of the series. Kiss was the first, and Conan was the second. It will sell for $1.50.

Frank Thorne
1967 Grenville Rd.
Scotch Plains, NJ 07076

Steve,

A few comments on THS #12.

Nice blue paper on the cover. I remember I used blue paper on the last issue cover of my shortlived fanzine (it was long ago, would you believe 1968!). It enhanced the black ink artwork, and I see it still does.

Lela Dowling has a fine line style I can go for. I hope the "Cheshire Cat" is a strip illustrated by her. I want to see more.

Typesetting really gives #12 a refined look. But there is a poor layout design in using the small jungle animals above the page #'s on the Jungle Heroines Debate. It breaks up the sentences too jaggedly, not to mention the words themselves on page 22.

Halftone pages turned out niece, also. I miss the old practice of crediting artists on the

title page, so one can tell who drew what, when the signatures become illegible as they sometimes do. Also I'd like to know who the artist is on the centerfold cover recreation.

All in all the issue has a nice settling in feeling. The transition is in the past.

Larry Heller
14349 Arlee Ave.
Norwalk, CA 90650

There are a number of things that I would do differently if I had THS #12 *to do over again, but it had been six months between* #11 *and* #12 *so I was pushed to get the issue out.*

Our current format on the title page doesn't leave room for artist credits, but in the future we will make sure all art is signed or initialed clearly, and the names can be double-checked with the listings in the staff box.

I don't know who recreated the cover of Rangers #17 *but it wasn't done recently. Brent provided the retouching necessary. The other uncredited illo was Starfawn by Tom Luth on page 29. - SRJ*

Dear Steven,

Issue number 12 was excellent – the transition is not as shaky as this reader feared. THS #12 rates with the best of the first 11 volumes.

It's hard to pin down who is contributing more to the upbeat nature, but the end result is a product any editor or publisher could be proud of.

Your cover managed to confuse me for 3 days. Did Supergirl adopt an emblem for Fandom? Was the illo that of Connie Stevens by way of Neal Adams? At last it dawned – it's none other than Mrs. Lee Majors!

Frank Thorne's letter and statements were enjoyable. He should not depreciate his style – to the borderline Marvel reader it looks just as good as Jack Kirby's or Gil Kane's illos.

I think this marks the first time that art "left over" from earlier Art Auctions has officially been reoffered. This is a very good idea, and should continue. The only aspect of this is that it might make an artist feel bad that a piece didn't get purchased the first time, but that probably won't occur.

The Idi Amin Award for Sportsmanlike writing goes to Valeria Beasley. If she hit THA/TA any farther below the belt, she could be hauled before the Guardians of Oa on a morals rap. Okay, so we don't have the philosophical discussions of *RBCC* or the earthly illos of *TBG* in *THS*; what we do have is a fun zine, in the sense that "Star Wars" or "Fantasia" or "Topper" or "The Muppet Show" is fun.

Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition.

Stephen Borer
2135 Iglehart Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55104

Normally all unsold pieces from the Art Auction are returned to the artist. I don't know why the pieces mentioned were not, but they eventually found their way into my hands, and I decided to reoffer them before returning them, apparently much to everyone's delight. - SRJ

Steven,

On receiving a copy of *The Adventuress* #6: For **Lela Dowling**, Your work is a Mozart String Quartet played in the darkness of fantasy, your conception of the female is a rose suspended in air.

Please keep drawing pictures for us all.

Frank Thorne

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COMIC ART - 16 3/8" x 11 3/4" with 2" flap *Fits most pages of modern comic book art; and many Sunday newspaper strips*	100 @ $ 7.00 300 @ $20.00 500 @ $32.50	100 @ $ 7.25 300 @ $20.75 500 @ $33.50
SINGLES JACKET COVER - 7 3/8" x 7 3/8" 4 mil polyethylene; no flap *Fits the outside jacket of all 45 rpm single records*	100 @ $ 3.25 300 @ $ 7.75 1000 @ $22.50	100 @ $ 3.40 300 @ $ 8.25 1000 @ $23.75
ALBUM JACKET COVER - 12 3/4" x 13" 4 mil polyethylene; no flap *Fits the outside jacket of most record albums*	100 @ $ 6.25 300 @ $16.75 500 @ $26.00	100 @ $ 6.50 300 @ $17.75 500 @ $27.50

"The Bag Man"

STEVEN R. JOHNSON
16385 Two Bar Rd.
Boulder Creek, CA 95006

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